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ENLT 495.02: History of the Native American Novel

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ENLT 495.02: HISTORY OF THE NATIVE AMERICAN NOVEL
SYLLABUS – FALL 2000

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Office hours: Monday/Wednesday 2-3:30pm, and other times by appointment. Please note: be sure to confirm an appointment time with me even during posted office hours. Otherwise I might be with another student or at the copy machine.

DESCRIPTION: From the early nineteenth-century through the late twentieth, American Indian writers have been shaping their stories to the forms of the novel, and reshaping novel forms in the process. The course explores the autobiographic, ethnographic, and historical roots of American Indian novels, and traces the major cultural and political themes on which these writers focus their narratives. As introduction, we will consider five fallacies in popular approaches to Native American issues: Romantic, Evolutionary, Techo, Racial, and Co-optive. These fallacies are built on binary ways of thinking that derive in turn from colonial power relations. Alternative Native approaches appear in the works of anthropologists Alfonso Ortiz and James Clifford, and we will consider these alternatives as they connect the fiction to traditional Native American values. Filtering through those fallacies, we will find a focus on community as a driving ethic and aesthetic in the stories Native Americans write.

GOALS: 1) Recognition of cultural, historical, and aesthetic trajectories of Native American novels. 2) Recognition of critical issues in the cross-cultural reading and writing of Native American novels. 3) Expressive skill in analyzing Native American novels through appropriate criteria. 4) Expressed engagement with themes of the literature as they apply to 21st-century lives.

REQUIREMENTS: The following list of activities tries to quantify your expected work. Frankly, no one can “quantify the quality” of your writing or discussion. Grading in arts and humanities courses inevitably entails subjective criteria. Thus more dialogue between student and faculty can become a productive approach to the problem of grading humanities performance. I hope you come to feel that I am open for you to get to know me both in and out of the classroom. Please come see me. In addition, if you have any certifiable disability that makes meeting the course requirements difficult, I will be glad to work with you on a mutually satisfying strategy for success. Both form and content will be graded, and explicit writing standards will be part of each assignment. Grades are based on a combination of written work, discussion, discussion questions, and attendance.

1. Participation in discussion of daily readings (averaging 25-30pp per class + novels) will be in both small groups and the full class. The course is designed for your input. NB: “participation” can be both vocal and silent, both speaking and listening, but not all of one or the other. This requirement assumes no more than three absences. Discussion is one of the best ways to learn, and the class can hardly flow without you there. This is so crucial to the course that I’ll take a few more lines here to explain: Everyone’s idea is important. When you speak, try to give your idea away to the group. You don’t need to defend it once it’s out there. And equally, when you listen, give each speaker respect. Humor helps too. We don’t need everyone to agree, but perhaps we can build a community in the classroom.
2. With exceptions, classes will include both lecture and discussion. Take note of these logistics: Depending on size, the class will be divided into revolving teams for generating discussion questions. (I’ll give you coaching on writing discussion questions.) Each individual is responsible for at least three questions. Individuals or teams will make handouts of discussion questions for the entire class. That means finishing the reading and preparing the DQs before our morning class.
3. Two take-home short-essay Unit Exams will combine personal response and critical analysis, graded on content and form.
4. Peer editing study groups of 3 students will meet outside of class during each of the two Unit Exams.
5. One 10-15 page essay using library resources, is due 12/12; thesis due 11/30.
6. Notice of an absence should be given in advance when we can arrange for your make-up work. More than three absences can drop the final grade.

REQUIRED READINGS (+ handouts):

Weaver, *That the People Might Live* (1997)
Mourning Dove, *Cogewea* (1927)
McNickle, *The Surrounded* (1936)
Momaday, *House Made of Dawn* (1968)
Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (1977)
Welch, *The Death of Jim Loney* (1979)
Erdrich, *Love Medicine* (1984)
Vizenor, *Heirs of Columbus* (1991)
Young Bear, *Black Eagle Child* (1992)
Alexie, *Reservation Blues* (1995)

**HISTORY OF THE NATIVE AMERICAN NOVEL
495.02 SEMESTER SCHEDULE, FALL 2000, T/Th**

UNIT 1 --		LITERATURE & COMMUNITY
9/5	--	Introductions; Four Fallacies; Alternatives; Nexus
9/7	--	Weaver Chapter 1/Overview
9/12	--	Erdrich
9/14	--	Erdrich
9/19	--	Erdrich
9/21	--	Young Bear
9/26	--	Young Bear
9/28	--	Young Bear.
UNIT 2 --		ASSIMILATION & RESISTANCE
10/3	--	Weaver Chapter 3
10/5	--	Mourning Dove
10/10	--	Mourning Dove
10/12	--	TBA
10/17	--	McNickle
10/19	--	McNickle
10/24	--	McNickle. 1 st & 2 nd Unit Exam handed out.
10/26	--	Discussion.
UNIT 3 --		NATIVE AMERICAN LITERARY RENAISSANCE
10/31	--	2 nd Unit Exam due. Discussion.
11/2	--	Weaver Chapter 4.
11/7	--	Election Day Holiday
11/9	--	Momaday
11/14	--	Momaday
11/16	--	Silko
11/21	--	Silko.
11/23	--	Thanksgiving Vacation (begins 11/22 Wednesday).
UNIT 4 --		CONTINUING SEARCH FOR COMMUNITY
11/28	--	Welch
11/30	--	Welch
12/5	--	Vizenor
12/7	--	Vizenor. 3 rd & 4 th Unit Exam handed out.
12/12	--	Alexie
12/14	--	Alexie.
Finals Week		
12/19, Tues.		3 rd & 4 th Unit Exam due in my mailbox (no class).
12/21, Thurs.		Final essay due in my mailbox (no class).